



## City of West Point

Council Work Session Minutes

Tuesday, April 8, 2021 @ 5:30 p.m.

Via teleconference

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The Work Session of the Mayor and Council was held by Teleconference April 8, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. with Mayor Steve Tramell presiding.

Members Participated:

Mayor Pro-Tem Gloria R. Marshall  
Councilmember Joseph R. Downs III  
Councilmember Alanteo “Henry” Hutchinson  
Councilmember Gerald W. Ledbetter  
Councilmember Sandra Thornton  
Councilmember Deedee Williams

Members Non-Participate:

**Agenda Reviewed**

Mayor Steve Tramell called the meeting to order. He reviewed the agenda and asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Councilmember Gerald W. Ledbetter made said motion. Councilmember Joseph R. Downs III; seconded the motion; **passed unanimously**

**Public Comments on agenda item**

There were no public comments.

**New Business**

• **Municipal Public Defender**

Mayor Steve Tramell stated they have contacted the Bar Association and the application period for the position has ended. Two people have express interest in filling the position. Brandy Easlick and Brian Aplin. The application information for Brian Aplin is in your Council packet. The Mayor and Council agreed to go forth with considering Brain Aplin, the applicant that submitted application.

• **Board & Committee Appointment**

Mayor Tramell stated the City has received an application from Marshall Sapp requesting to be re-appointed to the Hawkes Library Board. The application is in the Council packet and will be on the next Business agenda for consideration.

- **City Surplus**

Mayor Steve Tramell stated a list of city vehicles that are no longer in service are in the Council Packet. He stated staff recommends approval to surplus the city vehicles and place them on GovDeals.com to be sold. The list included: 2006 GMC 3500 Utility Vehicle, Vin# 1GDJC33D16F240817, 2008 Ford F-150, Utility Vehicle Vin# 1FTRX14W48FB35966, 2008 Ford Crown Victoria, Police Vehicle Vin#2FAFP71V48X136269, 2009 Ford Crown Victoria, Police Vehicle Vin#2FAHP71V19X115180, 2009 Ford Crown Victoria, Police Vehicle Vin#2FAHP71V19X115183, 2010 Ford Crown Victoria, Police Vehicle Vin# 2FABP7BVXAX138899, 2013 Dodge Charger, Police Vehicle Vin# 2C3DXAT2DH633169, 2013 Dodge Charger, Police Vehicle Vin# 2C3DXAT9DH633170, and 2006 Chevy Tahoe, Police Vehicle, VIN# 1GNEC13Z26R136932. The vehicles have been replaced over time through regular turn overs. The above surplus will be on the next Business agenda for consideration. Gov deals information is posted on the City's Website for anyone interested in trying to purchase the vehicles.

- **Salary Benefit Comparison**

Councilmember Sandra Thornton stated she asked the City Manager to conduct the survey. She stated the last time the Council made any changes was 2005. Councilmember Thornton stated she recommend using an independent community group to make a recommendation to the Mayor and Council for setting the salaries. She named Trudye Johnson, Coleman Reeves, and Wilky Gladden. Councilmember Deedee Williams stated she wanted to name a person on the committee. She recommended having five people on the committee instead of three. Councilmember Gerald W. Ledbetter stated he agreed with the public input recommendation. He also stated it did not matter to him how many people serve on the committee. The item will be discussed further in another work-session.

- **Recreation Improvements**

Mayor Tramell stated there are no changes to the Recreation Improvements from the last work session. Recreation improvements for the 6<sup>th</sup> Ave Park included 6-foot concrete sidewalk and walking path, asphalt parking lot with 24 spaces, and playground sections for children 2 to 5 years old and section for children 5 to 12 years old with seating for those who are responsible for the children. The parking lot will also serve as parking for the Fort Tyler/West View Cemetery during funerals. The other park improvements include 6-foot sidewalk and walking path to connect existing paths and sidewalks through the park, pedestrian bridge across the unnamed stream, pedestrian crossing at several street crossing locations. These improvements will encourage pedestrian traffic to use paths and sidewalks and not the streets, sidewalks, or walking on the grass. The projects will be funded by SPLOST. The item will be on the next Business meeting for consideration.

- **Juneteenth Holiday**

Mayor Tramell stated there were no changes from the last work-session. The Juneteenth Committee asked the City of West Point to consider making Juneteenth Day (June 19<sup>th</sup>) a City holiday. Juneteenth is celebrated for marking the end of slavery. Although President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1864 freeing slaves in the United States, the news did not reach Galveston Texas until June 19, 1865 which was the impetus for the first celebration marking the freedom of all slaves in the U. S. City Attorney Alex Dixon stated his research did not find anything that would prohibit the Mayor and Council to deem the day as a City holiday. Councilmember Deedee Williams asked how many holidays the City currently have off. The answer is nine. The item will be on the next Business agenda for consideration.

- **Groundswell SOUL**

Mayor Tramell stated at the last work-session Michelle Moore, CEO Groundswell stated Groundswell SOUL serves more than 3,800 customers. The program is designed to save on the amount customers pay for utilities by making the home energy efficient. Older houses tend to be less efficient. The program will help bring homes up to a level that will save on energy, by insulating the house. The cost of insulating the house would be paid through a USDA Rural Energy Saving Program (RESP) loan. The customer will pay the loan back by adding a fee to the customer utility bills. Ms. Moore asked the City to approve the West Point Soul Plan. Ms. Moore stated the homeowner will be notified that they eligible through Direct Mail after their utility bills are analyzed. She also stated Landlords will have to approve of the program.

Mayor Tramell stated City Staff stated after hearing the presentation and reviewing the proposed program, City Manager, Ed Moon provided some information and recommendation to the Mayor and Council. The City of West Point has provided programs for home improvements to include energy efficiency to its residents through the CHIP program. The City invested over \$100,000 in this program over the course of several years. The City is the electric provider for many of its residence and businesses. The City of West Point has a competitive electric rate and uses profits from the sale of electricity to keep rates low, operate a reliable electric system and provide funds to support other city services. The City of West Point owns a variety of generation resources that are a majority renewable. The City is obligated to these resources through contracts with the other cities that provide electricity in the State of Georgia through MEAG. The SOUL program is based on being integrated into our electric utility. The program is attached to selected low-and moderate-income electric utility customers with higher-than average utility bills.

- A. To determine eligible customers the SOUL program request usage data from ALL utility customers. This creates a customer privacy issue. The City may provide customer information to third parties under certain circumstances. Staff request to review the contract language, conduct a legal review, and give input prior to council moving this item forward for consideration.
- B. Staff would like to understand the billing, payment, and data collection processes in detail before this item is moved forward for consideration.

The SOUL program requests the City to apply for a loan through USDA Rural Energy Savings Program (RESP).

- A. Based on research of the USDA website the City will be the applicant and responsible for the repayment of the RESP loan.
- B. The selected electric customer would be billed by the City over time to repay the cost of any improvements to the property by the SOUL program.
- C. Based on the presentation property owners and renters are eligible for the SOUL program.
- D. Based on the presentation the cost of the improvements at rental property would stay with the meter at the location and be the responsibility of the tenant(s). Staff request to review the contract language, provide a legal review, and give input prior to council moving this item forward for consideration.
- E. The City has not in the past borrowed funds for any program of this nature. City staff recommends a detailed review of the RESP loan program and what other funds might be used to sponsor such a program before moving this item forward.

Staff recommends these steps be taken prior to approval of the SOUL plan for West Point. The Mayor and Council agreed the get more information before moving forward with groundswell SOUL recommendation.

### **Service Delivery Update**

Mayor Tramell stated the Troup County Service Delivery Meeting took place on April 1, 2021 at the Troup County Government Center. The attendees were West Point Mayor Steve Tramell, City Manager Ed Moon, Hogansville Mayor Bill Stankiewicz, City Manager Jonathan Lynn, Cities Attorneys, Andy Welch, and Brandon Palmer. Troup County Chairman Patrick Crews, County Manager Eric Mosley, and Attorney Jerry Willis. The attorneys for all parties are working toward an agreement.

### **Agenda for Business Meeting April 12, 2021**

Mayor Tramell reviewed the agenda for the April 12, 2021 Business meeting which included Municipal Public Defender, Board & Committee Appointments, City Surplus, Recreation Improvements, and Juneteenth Holiday. Councilmember Sandra Thornton made a motion to approve the next business meeting agenda; seconded by Councilmember Joseph R. Downs III; **passed unanimously**.

### **Other**

Councilmember Sandra Thornton stated Saturday April 10<sup>th</sup> beginning at 8:30 a.m. 1,100 boxes of food will be distributed on the vacant lot 10<sup>th</sup> Street and MLK. She also stated May 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> the Southwest Pageant will take place. She has tickets if anyone is interest in attending. Councilmember Thornton is a contestant in the pageant.

Councilmember Deedee Williams thanked Mayor Tramell, City Manager Ed Moon, and City Attorney Alex Dixon for their effort in trying to come to an agreement for Service Delivery with the other cities and Troup County.

Councilmember Gerald W. Ledbetter thanked Meghan Dukes, Kelvin Patrick and all the other members of the West Point Development Authority for all the hard work they do toward helping the growth of the City of West Point.

### **Adjourn**

Councilmember Gerald W. Ledbetter made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Sandra Thornton; **passed unanimously**.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned